

Senator Lesser, Representative Scanlon, and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for H.B. 5366, An Act Concerning the Cost of Prescription Drugs. My name is Sophia Forbes, and I am an AARP volunteer from Danbury. I believe that this legislation would help me and thousands of other Connecticut residents who are struggling with the high cost of prescription medication.

In June of 2018, I had a significant stroke that impacted my speech and processing abilities. I completed rehab, and with the help of a visiting nurse, occupational therapist, and physical therapist, I am doing much better. In order to continue my recovery and prevent another stroke, I take seven prescription medications, including a blood thinner called Eliquis, which costs nearly \$450 per month.

I have health insurance and prescription drug coverage, but I struggle with drug costs during the early months of the year when I have not yet hit my annual deductible. After I hit my annual deductible, my monthly copay for Eliquis is \$87. The copays for my other six medications are cheaper – about \$20 per month. Because my prescriptions are so expensive, I reach my annual deductible within the first few months of each new year. The problem is that I have to have a couple thousand dollars saved up so I can keep taking my medication during those months.

I am in a situation where I am “too rich for poor and too poor for rich.” I spent my career in education and retired with a teacher’s pension. It is enough money that I am not eligible for assistance programs, but it is not enough money that I can pay out of pocket for expensive medications before I hit my deductible each year. The monthly out-of-pocket cap proposed in H.B. 5366 would help me spread my costs out throughout the year.

H.B. 5366 would also help me by giving Connecticut residents access to less expensive Canadian prescription drugs. The cost of Eliquis in Canada is about 20% of what it is in the United States. Drug prices in the United States are some of the highest in the world. Why shouldn’t Connecticut residents be able to benefit from the lower drug prices that can be found just a few hundred miles away?

Thank you for your consideration of H.B. 5366. High prescription drug costs have had an impact on my life and the lives of many of my friends and neighbors. Please take action this legislative session and bring real relief to me and others like me who rely on their medication to stay healthy.